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LETTER DATED 8 APRIL 1996 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ETHIOPIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a press release issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia on 8 April 1996, concerning the implementation of Security Council resolution 1044 (1996).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mulugeta ETEFFA
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

96-08577 (E) 080496 090496

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Annex

Press statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 8 April 1996 on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1044 (1996)

The failed assassination attempt on the Egyptian President on 26 June 1995 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, was a serious crime. Not only because a head of State was the target, and not only because it involved the violation of Ethiopia's sovereignty, but also because it was a State-sponsored terrorist act. The fact that the Sudanese authorities were involved in the plot and that the security organs of the Sudanese Government were implicated in the crime is, by now, in no doubt.

It was after having been convinced that the Sudan still harbours three of the terrorists, including the leader of the group, that the Security Council adopted resolution 1044 (1996) calling on the Sudan, among other things, to hand over these suspects to Ethiopia. The Sudan was given 60 days to comply with the resolution. It is now clear that by the end of March, which marks the end of the deadline, the Sudan has not yet complied with the request of the Security Council. That is why the Council is at the moment considering what steps to take to put increased pressure on the Government of the Sudan to secure compliance with its demand.

Ethiopia's position is that the maximum pressure should be brought to bear on the Sudanese authorities - authorities who were involved in the crime - to compel them to respond positively to the requests contained in resolution 1044 (1996). Ethiopia is also convinced that whether or not the Sudanese authorities will comply with the demands of the Council will depend on how clearly and strongly the Council sends the necessary message that it will no longer put up with the defiance of the Sudanese authorities.

Obviously, the pressure being applied by the Security Council is on the Sudanese authorities, and not on the Sudanese people. It is the Sudanese regime that sponsored the heinous crime and it should always be the target. That is also what Ethiopia has been calling for.

But Ethiopia is not a member of the Security Council and as such it is not in a position to have direct and meaningful impact on the decision of the Council. Therefore, it will await the outcome of how the Council will discharge its heavy responsibility regarding an issue that involves the discovery of a country being engaged in sponsoring terrorism in a clear and naked manner.

On the other hand, it is Ethiopia's conviction that it has indeed discharged its responsibility fully and with honour. It has made the necessary effort at the bilateral level. When that did not work it took the matter to the Organization of African Unity (OAU). When the Sudanese authorities showed disrespect for the OAU, Ethiopia decided to refer the matter to the Security Council - an organ of the United Nations with primary responsibility for international peace and security - with the conviction that the Council would brook no attempt by any country to resort to the laws of the jungle.

As such, at this point in time the issue of Sudanese involvement in the assassination attempt against President Mubarak is not an Ethiopian issue, but rather a grave issue that the Security Council and the international community have to grapple with. Ethiopia is very proud of what it has done so far to ensure that the crime committed by Sudanese authorities is brought to light and is referred to the appropriate regional and international bodies. It has thus discharged its responsibilities fully and completely. It is for others now to discharge their responsibilities likewise for their credibility is on the line.